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(54) Title: NUCLEIC ACID PROBES, BROAD-RANGE PRIMERS, AND METHODS IN WHICH THEY ARE USED

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to nucleic acid probes and to broad-range primers that are useful in the identification of bacterial species and the diagnosis of bacterial infections. Especially, the invention relates to specific nucleic acid probes that originate from hyper-variable regions situated near the conserved sequences of the gene for RNA polymerase beta subunit, *rpoB* (DNA directed RNA polymerase subunit B) of infection-causing bacteria. The invention also relates to broad-range primers originating from the conserved regions of *rpoB* genes. In addition, the invention relates to the use of these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers in the diagnosis of bacterial infections as well as to diagnostic methods in which these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers are used.

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